

FRANKLIN NORTHEAST SUPERVISORY UNION

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TO: Rebecca Holcombe, Vermont Secretary of Education

FROM: Lynn Cota, Superintendent *LC*
Franklin Northeast Supervisory Union

DATE: January 29, 2018

RE: Alternative Governance Structure Proposal: Lawfully Required
Submission of an Act #46 Sec. 9 Proposal on Behalf of the Enosburgh and
Richford Town School Districts' Boards

Attached please find a joint "Section 9 Proposal," also referenced as an Alternative Governance Structure proposal, submitted under the direction of the Enosburgh and Richford Town School Boards. Following two previously failed voluntary Act #46 merger votes, the Proposal herein satisfies the two boards' requirements under statute to (a) self-evaluate, (b) have regional discussions, and (c) propose steps to improve their districts' ability to meet and exceed the five goals of Act 46. As such, I respectfully request you consider this as the districts' shared Proposal for an approved Alternative Governance Structure.

Voters in Enosburgh and Richford have asserted their will on the two districts' twice defeated Act #46 proposals. In honoring the vote outcomes while concurrently striving to address the ideals of Act #46, the two boards put forth this Alternative Governance Proposal. Of particular significance within this Proposal, I respectfully point to the proposed formation of the "Enosburgh Richford School Council" (ERSC), whose sole purpose will be to advise the boards on how the separate districts, moving forward, can best jointly address the goals of Act #46.

It's important I emphasize this Proposal is not designed to merely demonstrate technical compliance with the law. Rather, it is the result of the earnest and considered interests of the two districts' governing bodies whose commitment to the ideals of Act #46 is in evidence through the two previously proposed, albeit failed votes. Both school boards are committed to improving equity, efficiency and effectiveness within their respective districts, and firmly believe this proposed alternative structure is an authentic means to jointly do so.

I appreciate some of the complexities you will face as you develop your proposed Statewide Plan. Enosburgh and Richford board members, the project consultant and I welcome our pending conversations with you to further discuss this submission. We further appreciate our ongoing opportunity to submit additional data and/or analysis in response to questions, suggestions and/or concerns you may have as you consider this Proposal.

Thank you.

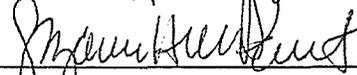
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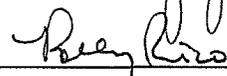
We, the undersigned members of the Enosburgh Town School District Board and the Richford Town School District Board support the submission of this joint Section 9 proposal.

Enosburgh Town School District Board

Rick Bartholomew, Enosburgh School Board Member 

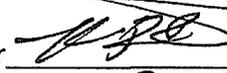
Michael Howrigan, Enosburgh School Board Chair 

Suzanne Hull-Parent, Enosburgh School Board Member 

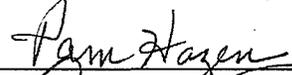
Polly Rico, Enosburgh School Board Member 

Michael Wright, Enosburgh School Board Vice-Chair 

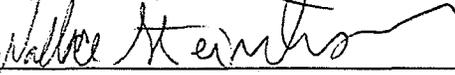
Richford Town School District Board

Kevin Blaney, Richford School Board Member 

Mandy Guilmette, Richford School Board Member 

Pam Hazen, Richford School Board Member 

Andy Pond, Richford School Board Chair 

Wally Steinhour, Richford School Board Vice-Chair 

*ENOSBURGH & RICHFORD TOWN SCHOOL
DISTRICTS' JOINT SUBMISSION*

***ACT 46 SEC. 9
ALTERNATIVE
GOVERNANCE
STRUCTURE
PROPOSAL***

January 24, 2018

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PROPOSAL CONTRIBUTORS

Members of the Enosburgh and Richford Town School District Boards

- Dr. Rick Bartholomew, Enosburgh Member
- Mr. Kevin Blaney, Richford Member
- Ms. Mandy Guilmette, Richford Clerk
- Ms. Pam Hazen, Richford Member
- Mr. Michael Howrigan, Enosburgh Chair
- Ms. Suzanne Hull-Parent, Enosburgh Member
- Mr. Andrew Pond, Richford Chair
- Ms. Polly Rico, Enosburgh Clerk
- Mr. Wally Steinhour, Richford Vice-Chair
- Mr. Michael Wright, Enosburgh Vice-Chair

FNESU Administrators

- Ms. Lynn Cota, Superintendent
- Mr. Morgan Daybell, Business Manager

Enosburgh and Richford Town School District Principals & Director

- Mr. Nathan Demar, CHCC Director
- Mr. Robert Fehr, Richford Junior Senior High School Assistant Principal
- Ms. Michelle Lussier, EES Principal
- Ms. Beth O'Brien, Richford PK-12Principal
- Mr. Erik Remmers, EFHS Principal
- Ms. Rachel Reynolds, EFMS Principal
- Mr. Jim Starr, EFHS Assistant-Principal

Project Consultant

- Dr. Michael R. Deweese



Editorial note #1: The Town of *Enosburgh* is spelled with an “h.” The Village of *Enosburg Falls* is spelled without an “h.” Similarly, the schools of *Enosburg Falls Elementary*, *Enosburg Falls Middle* and *Enosburg Falls High* each spell *Enosburg* without an “h.” The *Enosburgh Town School District* is spelled with an h.”

Editorial note #2: Throughout this document, “Act #46” refers to Act 46 of 2015 and as subsequently amended by Act 49 of 2017. “Section 9” refers to Act 46, Sec. 9 (2015).

INTRODUCTION

This Alternative Governance Structure Proposal seeks to keep some things the same and change other conditions. The Proposal takes into consideration the current state of the Enosburgh and Richford Town School Districts, the needs of the districts’ current and future students, identified economic and cultural realities of the communities’ political landscapes and a thoughtful set of methods to accomplish two necessary objectives: (1) continue the rapid current pace of meaningful progress in the districts, and (2) install structural means of making further progress in accomplishing the ideals of Act 46.

The Proposal herein seeks to continue the existence of Enosburgh and Richford Town School districts as separate governance entities. The recent history of two locally defeated consolidation efforts is central to this Proposal. Based on organizational efficiencies already achieved across FNESU, there is strong public sentiment that significant additional efficiencies are unlikely to be achieved through formally merging the two districts. Additionally, when melding two tax rates into one there is bound to be a “winner” and a “loser,” which would only serve to unnecessarily divide the two communities. There exists deep passion at the local community level for the vitally important institutions of each community’s local schools.



The Proposal seeks to have Enosburgh and Richford remain as members of Franklin Northeast Supervisory Union. Enosburgh and Richford are long-standing members of the supervisory union, and have benefitted accordingly. Further, Enosburgh and Richford, as the two largest districts in the SU, and the only districts directly educating pupils in grades PK-12, have been significant contributors to the overall successes of the supervisory union.

Within this Proposal is a fundamental assertion that by remaining separate entities, owned separately by their respective communities, locally responsible for assets and debts, and responsive at the town level for the education of its children, the schools will continue to have the informed confidence and support of their respective communities.

Noted within this Proposal is the boards' shared recognition that there is room for improvement, and by the two school communities working together in meaningful ways each can further address and advance the issues of equity, efficiency and excellence for mutual benefit. This requires an accountable structure and the Proposal squarely addresses means to achieve that end.

The boards are grateful to the General Assembly that Act 46 does not require a "one size fits all" solution across Vermont. Locally, the school boards of Enosburgh and Richford have developed a respect and appreciation for one another, and are working cooperatively at previously unseen levels. The boards recognize they can each be stronger by mutually supporting one another. While honoring their respective district's unique "DNAs," but also in pulling together, local district strengths can be further maximized and needs better met.

There is genuine concern felt by both boards that a State Board of Education mandated merger of the two districts would be viewed as counterproductive by the electorates, which have spoken on the subject not just once, but twice. The boards have worked hard, and continue to work hard to earn the confidence of their respective citizens. Any forced merger could be a setback disaffecting children.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Act 46 Section 9 Proposal is submitted under the direction of the Enosburgh and Richford Town School Boards. By design, it is filed as joint proposal by the two districts.

Following two previously failed voluntary merger votes, the Proposal satisfies the two boards' requirements under statute to (a) self-evaluate, (b) have regional discussions, and (c) propose steps to improve their districts' ability to meet and exceed the five goals of Act 46. It is the districts' intent that this shared Proposal be considered as an approved Alternative Governance Structure.

The Proposal is not designed to merely demonstrate technical compliance with the law. Rather, it is the result of the earnest and considered interests of the two districts' governing bodies whose commitment to the ideals of Act 46 is in evidence through the two previously failed votes. By way of example within this Proposal is the proposed formation of the "Enosburgh Richford School Council" (ERSC), whose sole purpose will be to advise the boards on how the separate districts, moving forward, can best jointly address the goals of Act #46.

Both school boards are committed to improving equity, efficiency and excellence within their respective districts, and firmly believe this proposed Alternative Governance Structure is an authentic means to jointly do so.



GOVERNING AUTHORITY

On December 11, 2017, the Enosburgh Town School District school board voted unanimously to develop a joint Act 46 Sec. 9 Proposal with the Richford Town School District school board designed to leave each current single district governance structure intact.

On December 11, 2017, the Richford Town School District school board also voted unanimously to develop a joint Act 46 Sec. 9 Proposal with the Enosburgh Town School District school board designed to leave each current single district governance structure intact.

Upon these common actions, each board committed to working with the other in developing joint activities for the shared benefit of strengthening each district's ability as separate entities to meet the goals of Act 46.

To this end, joint Enosburgh and Richford board meetings were held on December 20, 2017 and January 2, 16 and 24, 2018. This Proposal was approved by the two boards on January 24, 2018.



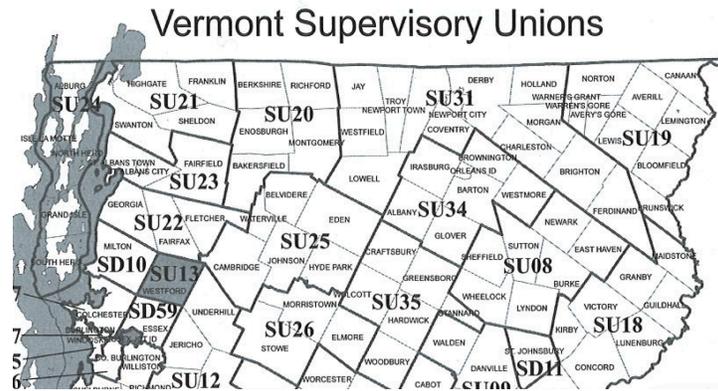
CONTEXT: FRANKLIN NORTHEAST SUPERVISORY UNION

Franklin Northeast Supervisory Union (FNESU) is located in the northeast corner of Franklin County, VT. Its current (2017-18) district membership is comprised of the following town school districts:

- Bakersfield (pre-K through grade 8)
- Berkshire (pre-K through grade 8)
- Enosburgh (pre-K through grade 12 and host to the region’s technical education center (Cold Hollow Career Center)
- Montgomery (pre-K through grade 8)
- Richford (pre-K through grade 12)

The following map (Figure 1) illustrates the location of FNESU (SU 20).

Figure 1. Regional Supervisory Unions in Northern Vermont.¹



FNESU is somewhat unusual with respect to it having two high schools within its jurisdiction (Enosburg Falls High School and Richford High School); only six other Vermont superintendencies host multiple high schools.

¹ Map credit: Vermont Education Directory (2016-17), published by the Vermont Superintendents and Vermont Principals Associations.



The Communities of Enosburgh & Richford

Enosburgh is located in eastern Franklin County, and encompasses the village of Enosburgh Falls and the settlements of Bordoville, East Enosburgh, North Enosburgh, Sampsonville, West Enosburgh and Enosburgh Center.

The following map (Figure 2) illustrates the location of Enosburgh within Vermont and within Franklin County.

Figure 2. Map of Enosburgh Within Franklin County.²

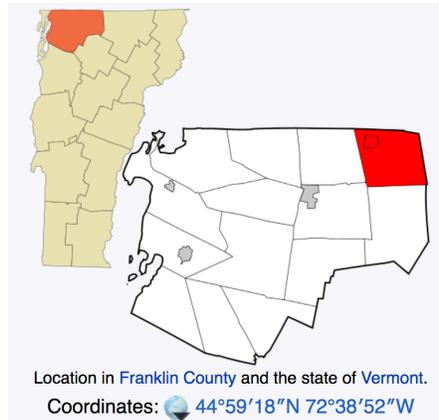


The following map (Figure 3) illustrates the location of Richford within Vermont and within Franklin County.

² Map credits: <https://en.wikipedia.org> ...



Figure 3. Map of Richford Within Franklin County.³



Enosburgh and Richford share a common boundary of approximately 0.6 miles. More importantly, the area's largest state highway, VT #105 connects the two town's centers. The following map (Figure 4) shows the shared towns' boundary and VT Highway #105 between the Enosburg Falls and Richford town centers.

Figure 4. VT State Highway #105 Connecting (in part) Enosburgh and Richford.⁴



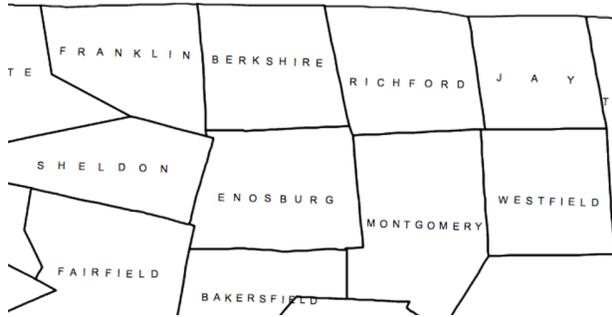
The following map (Figure 5) illustrates the communities adjacent to Enosburgh and Richford. To the north of Richford is the province of Quebec, Canada.

³ *ibid.*

⁴ *Map excerpt credit: VTrans.*



Figure 5. Communities Adjacent to Enosburgh and Richford.⁵



Enosburgh and Richford respectively have similar land masses. Enosburgh comprises a total of 48.7 square miles while Richford comprises a total of 43.3 square miles.

⁵ Map credit: Vermont Center for Geographic Information, <http://vcgi.vermont.gov>.



Demographics of Enosburgh and Richford⁶

Per each decennial census taken since 1800, Enosburgh’s population peaked at 2,788 citizens in the year 2000. Richford’s population peaked at 2,907 citizens in the year 1910. In 2010, Enosburgh’s population was recorded at 2,781, while Richford’s population was recorded at 2,308. The following table illustrates each town’s population changes and decade-to-decade population change in recent census counts.

Table 1. Last Half-Century of US Census Results for Enosburgh and Richford (including percentage change from prior census).

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Enosburgh	1,918	2,070	2,535	2,788	2,781
% change from prior census	-2.4%	7.9%	22.5%	10.0%	-0.3%
Richford	2,116	2,206	2,178	2,321	2,308
% change from prior census	-8.6%	4.3%	-1.3%	6.6%	-0.6%

Since the original US Census of 1800, Enosburgh citizens outnumbered Richford citizens for all of the nineteenth century (at times twice the number); Richford citizens outnumbered Enosburgh citizens for most of the twentieth century, and since the 1990 census Enosburgh again has the larger population.

Through use of the most recent federal (2010) decennial census, the Census Bureau extrapolated the estimated resident populations of the communities through 2014. Enosburgh’s resident population was estimated at 2,754 while Richford’s resident population was estimated at 2,316.

⁶ Population information courtesy of U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census of Population and Housing, Population and Housing Unit Counts, CPH-2-47, Vermont U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 2012.



The median age (2010) in both Enosburgh and Richford was slightly above the Franklin County median. Enosburgh’s median age was below the state median age, and Richford’s median age was barely above the state median age. See Table 2.

Table 2. Median Age (in years).⁷

Median Age (in years)	2010
Enosburgh	40.0
Richford	40.7
Franklin County	39.6
State of Vermont	41.5

In 2010, the age distribution of citizens in both communities closely resembled each other. Both Enosburgh’s and Richford’s percentages of citizens under the age of 18 mirrored the county percentage, and both were above the state average. Both Enosburgh’s and Richford’s percentages of citizens aged 18-64 years were less than the county and state percentages. And, both Enosburgh’s and Richford’s percentages of citizens aged 65 and above were higher than both the county and state percentages. (See Table 3.)

Table 3. 2010 Age Distribution of Enosburgh and Richford Citizens.⁸

	<u>Under 18 Years</u>	<u>18 - 64 Years</u>	<u>65+ Years</u>
Enosburgh	24.0	60.9	15.1
Richford	24.2	59.2	16.6
Franklin County	24.7	63.1	12.2
State of Vermont	20.0	65.1	14.9

The educational attainment level, measured by the percentage of citizens with a high school diploma (and above) and the percentage of citizens with a bachelor’s degree (or higher) has

⁷ US Decennial Census: 2010, as reflected in the two communities’ municipal plans.

⁸ Source: Vermont Indicators Online and 2010 US Decennial Census.

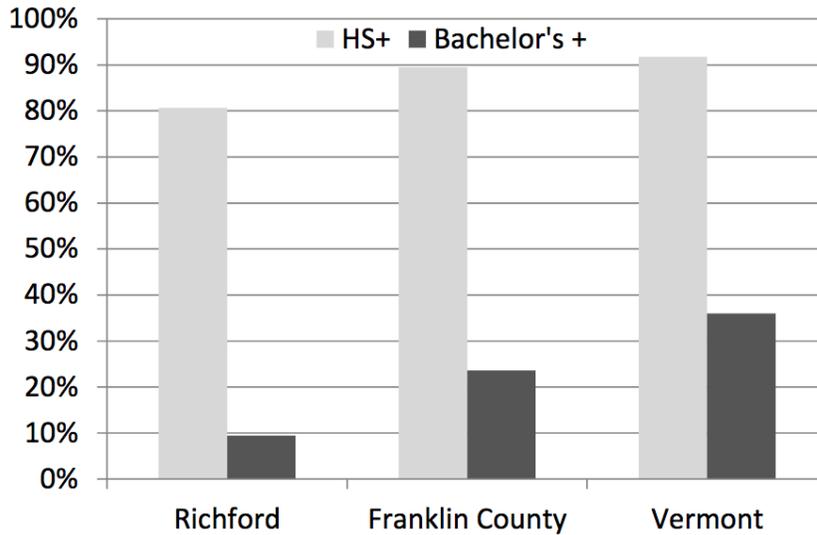


continued to rise over time in both categories for Enosburgh and Richford. The available Enosburgh data show the years 2000 and 2011, and the Richford data shows the year 2015. (See Tables 4 and 5.)

Table 4. Enosburgh Educational Attainment (by Percentage): 2000 and 2011.⁹

	% with a High School Diploma or Higher		% with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher	
	2000	2011	2000	2011
Enosburgh	75.3	79.7	10.5	14.7
Franklin County	82.0	88.3	15.3	21.1
Vermont	86.0	91.0	27.0	33.8

Table 5. Richford Educational Attainment (by Percentage): 2015.¹⁰



The median household incomes of Enosburgh and Richford over time are below the county and state averages. The percentage of all persons living below the poverty level in both Enosburgh and Richford exceed the county and state average. Table 6 illustrates data for Enosburgh (through 2011) and Table 7 illustrates data for Richford (through 2015).

⁹ Source: Town & Village of Enosburgh, Vermont: Comprehensive Municipal Plan (2015).

¹⁰ Source: Town of Richford Municipal Plan (2017).



Table 6. Enosburgh’s Median Household Income and Percent of Families with Income Below the Poverty Level.¹¹

	Median Household Income (\$)				% of all persons living below the poverty level		
	1979	1989	1999	2011	1989	1999	2011
Enosburgh	12,174	22,872	33,683	48,835	17.1	11.4	16.3
Franklin County	14,025	28,401	41,659	55,181	10.2	9.0	10.2
Vermont	14,790	29,792	40,856	53,422	9.9	9.4	11.3

Table 7. Richford’s Median Household Income, Percent Change, and Percent Below the Poverty Level.¹²

	2000	2010	2015	% Change 2000-2015	% of all persons living below the poverty level 2015
Richford	\$28,125	\$36,890	\$43,306	54	17.4
Franklin County	\$41,659	\$53,623	\$58,199	39.7	8.7
Vermont	\$40,856	\$51,814	\$55,176	35	11.5

The citizens of Enosburgh and Richford show similar employment patterns by sector. Enosburgh’s data are from 2011. Richford’s data are from 2015. (See Tables 8 and 9.)

¹¹ Source: US Census of Population (1980-2000); American Community Survey 2007-2011.

¹² Source: US Census of Population (2000-2010); American Community Survey 2011-2015.



Table 8. Enosburgh Residents' Employment by Industry.¹³

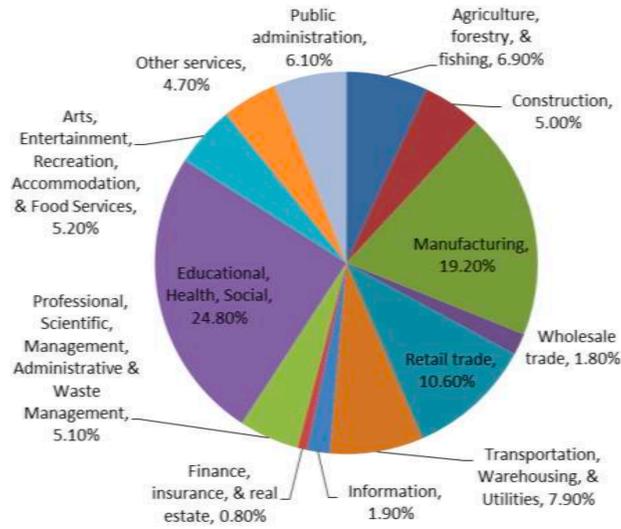
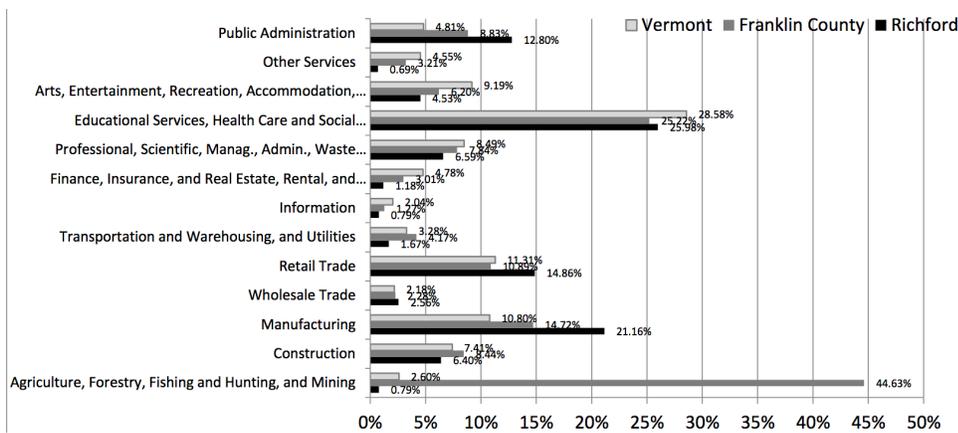


Table 9. Richford Residents' Employment by Sector.¹⁴



¹³ Source: US Census of Population (2010).

¹⁴ Source: American Community Survey (2011-2015).



A Rich History of Inter-Community Relationships Between the Towns of Enosburgh and Richford

Enosburgh and Richford, at the community level, have consistently enjoyed a cooperative, and often collaborative relationship. While each community is rightfully proud of its own unique “DNA,” in many ways Enosburgh and Richford continue to enjoy a symbiotic relationship. Examples include:

- Media
 - A daily (six days per week) newspaper in St. Albans covers both Enosburgh and Richford.
 - A weekly newspaper covers the county (with an emphasis on the eastern portion of the county) in service to both Enosburgh and Richford.
- State infrastructure:
 - Access between Enosburgh and Richford is naturally and easily supported by VT Highway #105.
 - Vermont State Police services through the St. Albans barracks cover both communities.
 - The Franklin County Sheriff’s office serves both communities.
 - Vermont Superior Court (Family, Probate, Civil and Criminal divisions) serves both communities.
 - Corrections programming (Restorative Justice, Court Diversion) serves both communities.
 - Both towns are members of the Northwest Regional Planning Commission.
 - Both towns are members of the Northwest Vermont Solid Waste Management District.
- Employment:
 - Cross-town employment is common.
 - Both towns are in the same Vermont Department of Labor’ *Workforce Investment* region.
 - Both towns are in the same Vermont Department of Labor’s *Labor Market Area*



- Proximity to the Canadian border.
 - US government departments (i.e., US Customs and Border Patrol) employ both Enosburgh and Richford citizens.
- Commerce:
 - A number of unique businesses and restaurants exist in each community, mutually drawing business from both communities.
 - Both communities are members of the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce.
- Mutual aid:
 - A high level of cooperation exists between the towns' ambulance and volunteer fire services.
- Natural Resources:
 - The upper Missisquoi River flows through Richford and Enosburgh (appointees from the two communities served with eight other communities' appointees studied the transfer of information, considered the potential benefits of Wild & Scenic designation, and made recommendations for voluntary strategies for protection of the river's resources).
 - The 26 mile-long Missisquoi Valley rail trail has a strong presence in both Enosburgh and Richford.
- Health Services:
 - Strongly networked health services serve both communities.
- Transportation Services:
 - Green Mountain Transit provides bus service for both communities to and from St. Albans and the broader LINK system.
- Banking Services
 - Four banks serve Enosburgh and Richford, one with branches in both towns.
- Community Based Sports
 - Shared youth sports leagues (i.e., Little League, Babe Ruth baseball, Mini-Metro basketball, etc.).
 - Cross-town Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) team membership.



- Bowling.
- Membership & playing at each town's golf country club.
- Cross-Town Participation & Attendance at Community Events
 - Local town parades.
 - Fall festivals and Christmas in Enosburgh and Richford Tree Lighting.
 - Summer NOTCH program in Richford.
 - LEAPS Afterschool Program in each town.
 - Enosburgh LEAPS Summer Program.
 - Free Meals through the summer in Enosburgh and at NOTCH Summer Camp
 - Theater Camp at Enosburgh Opera House.
 - Church group summer camp.
 - Boy and Girl Scout groups.
 - Old Home Days in Richford.
 - Concerts in the towns' parks.
 - Libraries (including libraries' story hour).
 - Richford Conservation Commission nature walks and nature education.
 - Camp Hope in Richford for afternoon summer programming.
 - Walk to school events in collaboration with VT Rise.
 - Town bands.
 - Famers' markets.
 - Adult education.
 - Concerts.
 - Churches.
 - Libraries.
 - Other events (i.e., June Dairy Day, Hometown Follies, holiday events, museums, legislative breakfasts, Opera House events, etc.).



Proximity of Schools¹⁵

Enosburg Elementary School is 9.4 miles (15 minutes) from Richford Elementary School. Enosburg Falls High School is 10.6 miles (18 minutes) from Richford Jr.-Sr. High School.

While Franklin County has three other high schools, each is a considerable distance from FNESU. Missisquoi Valley Union High School is in Swanton and 27.4 miles and 39 minutes from Richford High School; Bellows Free Academy/St. Albans is 29.3 miles and 43 minutes from Richford High School; and, Bellows Free Academy/Fairfax is 32.8 miles and 54 minutes from Richford High School.

Some other high schools in northern Vermont are even further away. Lamoille UHSD #18 (Hyde Park) is 27.3 miles and 48 minutes from Enosburg Falls High School; North Country UHSD #22 (Newport) is 41.8 miles and 1:02 from Enosburg Falls High School; Hazen UHSD #26 (Hardwick) is 48.8 miles and 1:11 from Enosburg Falls High School; and, Lake Region UHSD #24 is 49.0 miles and 1:06 from Enosburg Falls High School. From both Enosburgh and Richford, travel to three of these schools would require mountain travel.

These other seven high schools cited above, based on their lack of proximity to Enosburgh and Richford, are impractical to be considered for any formal partnerships with either the Enosburgh or Richford Town School Districts.

FNESU is further unique with respect to its career and technical center service region. Cold Hollow Career Center's service region exclusively serves the five member districts of its own supervisory union. Per State Board rule, FNESU students may attend other regional centers for purposes of attending programs not offered at Cold Hollow Career Center.

¹⁵ Times and distances calculated using <https://maps.google.com>.



This is significant based on the historical siting of the state's career and technical centers. Historically, the Vermont State Board of Education's strategic siting of the state's regional vocational/technical centers focused statewide on the need for vocational/technical education students having legitimate access to regional centers, measured in travel time and distance. The example of siting the Cold Hollow Career Center in Enosburg Falls underscores the uniqueness of both Enosburgh's and Richford's geographic settings, and their interdependence on one another for areas students' vocational/technical education access.

Cold Hollow Career Center offers half-day / two-year programming to students from Richford and Enosburg Falls High Schools; it is within walking distance from Enosburg Falls High School and bus riding distance from Richford High School. Enrollment at Cold Hollow Career Center is routinely formed from approximately half of each of the two-participating high school's eligible populations.



Enosburgh and Richford School Enrollments

The following Tables illustrate recent school enrollments.

Table 10. Enosburg Elementary School Recent Enrollments by Grade

Enosburg Elementary School						
Grade	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18 (Ant.)
Pre-K3	10	21	15	25	23	23
Pre-K4	34	19	30	29	30	30
K	31	41	29	37	32	30
1	34	29	39	26	35	32
2	28	31	32	39	26	35
3	38	27	24	36	42	26
4	45	44	26	28	34	42
5	36	43	43	25	25	34
Total:	256	255	238	245	247	252

Table 11. Enosburg Falls Middle School Recent Enrollments by Grade.

Enosburg Falls Middle School						
Grade	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18 (Ant.)
6	29	43	43	42	26	25
7	39	26	48	43	44	26
8	26	36	26	49	41	44
Total:	94	105	117	134	111	95



Table 12. Enosburg Falls High School Recent Enrollment by Grade

Enosburg Falls High School						
Grade	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18 (Ant.)
9	80	74	93	78	89	41
10	83	79	76	97	75	89
11	86	78	82	77	97	75
12	72	84	76	73	69	97
Total:	321	315	327	325	330	302

Table 13. Richford Elementary School Recent Enrollment by Grade.

Richford Elementary School						
Grade	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18 (Ant.)
Pre-K3		8	25	15	12	12
Pre-K4	31	20	15	20	20	20
K	34	25	26	32	24	24
1	31	34	22	21	26	24
2	34	33	32	23	21	26
3	37	37	38	28	25	21
4	21	36	36	32	32	25
5	28	20	36	34	32	32
6	39	29	20	35	-	-
Total:	255	242	250	240	192	184



Table 14. Richford Jr.-Sr. High School Recent Enrollment by Grade.

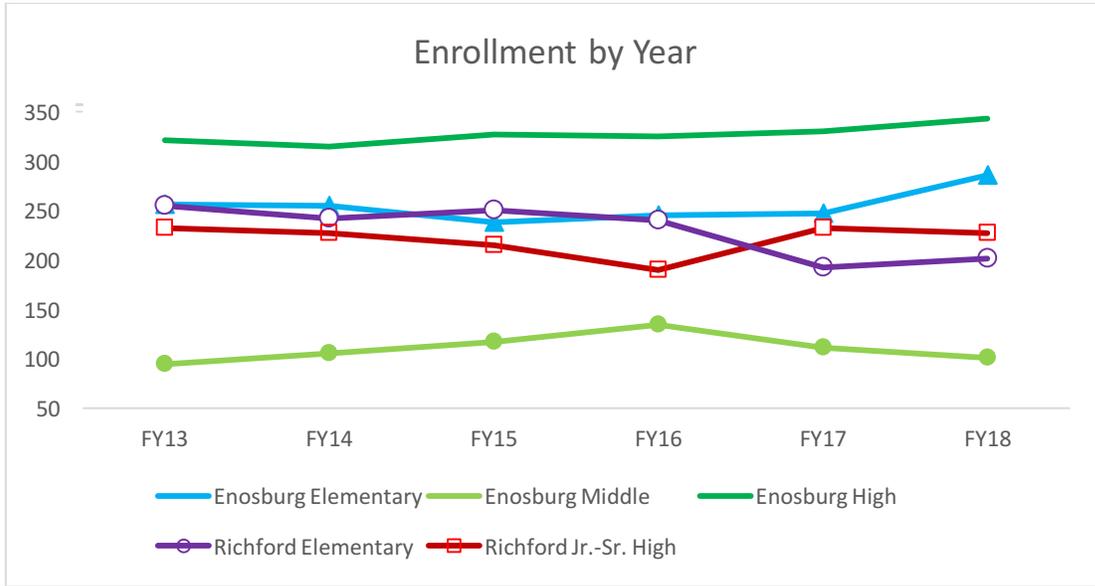
Richford Jr.-Sr. High School						
Grade	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18 (Ant.)
6	-	-	-	-	35	32
7	28	37	29	22	34	35
8	30	30	37	30	19	34
9	41	43	40	44	39	19
10	45	31	37	31	41	39
11	46	42	30	32	30	41
12	42	44	42	31	34	30
Total:	232	227	215	190	232	230

Table 15. Enosburgh and Richford Recent Enrollment by Grades.

Enrollment	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18
Enosburg Elementary	256	255	238	245	247	286
Enosburg Middle	94	105	117	134	111	101
Enosburg High	321	315	327	325	330	343
Richford Elementary	255	242	250	240	192	201
Richford Jr.-Sr. High	232	227	215	190	232	227
Total	1158	1144	1147	1134	1112	1158

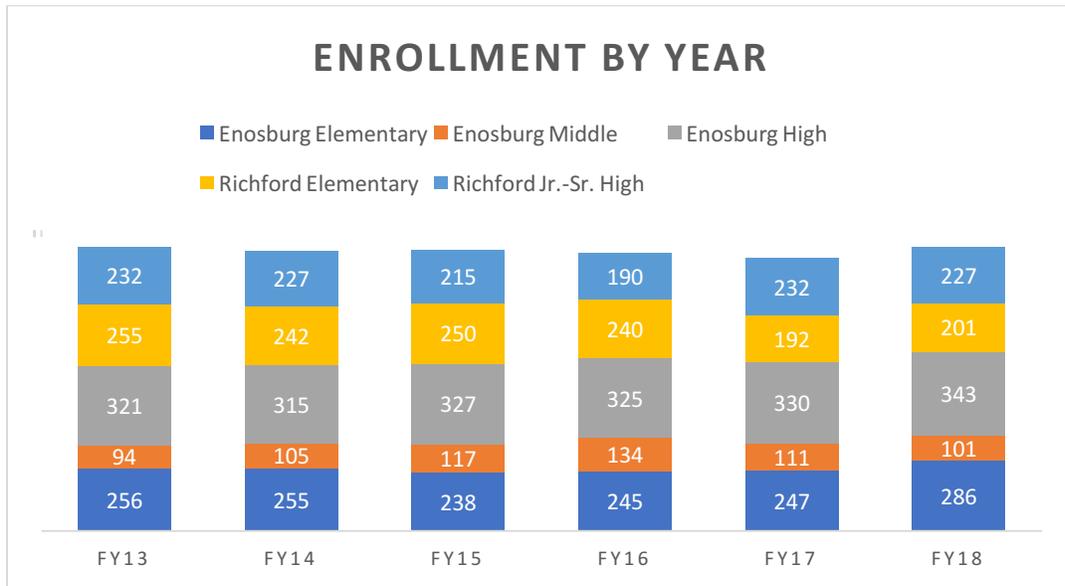


Table 16. Enosburgh and Richford Schools' Enrollment by Year.



Note: FY 17 is the year grade 6 moved from Richford Elementary School to Richford High School

Table 17. Enosburgh and Richford Schools' Enrollment by Year.



Equity of Access to Technology Data

Each district provides students with 1:1 computing devices beginning in grade 1 or 2 (see Table 18.)

Table 18. Enosburgh and Richford 1:1 Computing Device.

	Enosburg	Richford
Pre-K	Shared Devices	Shared Devices
K	Shared Devices	Shared Devices
1	1:1 Chromebooks	Shared Devices
2	1:1 Chromebooks	1:1 Chromebooks
3	1:1 Chromebooks	1:1 Chromebooks
4	1:1 Chromebooks	1:1 Chromebooks
5	1:1 Chromebooks	1:1 Chromebooks
6	1:1 iPads	1:1 Chromebooks
7	1:1 iPads	1:1 Chromebooks
8	1:1 iPads	1:1 Chromebooks
9	1:1 Chromebooks	1:1 Chromebooks
10	1:1 iPads	1:1 Chromebooks
11	1:1 iPads	1:1 Chromebooks
12	1:1 iPads	1:1 Chromebooks



Equity of Access to Student Support Services

Student support service structures are unique to each school (Table 19).

Table 19. Student Support Services by School.

	Literacy Interventionists	Math Interventionists	Literacy Instructional Coach	Math Instructional Coach	Special Educator (K-8)	Home School Coordinator	Percentage of teachers with 5 or fewer years experience
Enosburg Elementary School	1.2 FTE	0.5 FTE	0.5 FTE	0.5 FTE	2.0 FTE	1.0 FTE	Enosburgh Schools 29%
Enosburg Falls Middle School	0.4 FTE	0	0.5 FTE	0	1.5 FTE	0	
Enosburg Falls High School	1.5 FTE	0	0	0	4.0 FTE	0	
Richford Elementary School	1.125 FTE	1.125 FTE	0.5 FTE	0.5 FTE	2.5 FTE	0	Richford Schools 56%
Richford Junior High School	0.25 FTE	0.6 FTE	0	0	2.0 FTE	0	
Richford Senior High School	0	0	0	0	2.0 FTE	0	



Districts' Financial Data

The following Tables (Tables 20 – 24) illustrate financial data for the two districts.

Table 20. Enosburg and Richford Education Spending by Year.

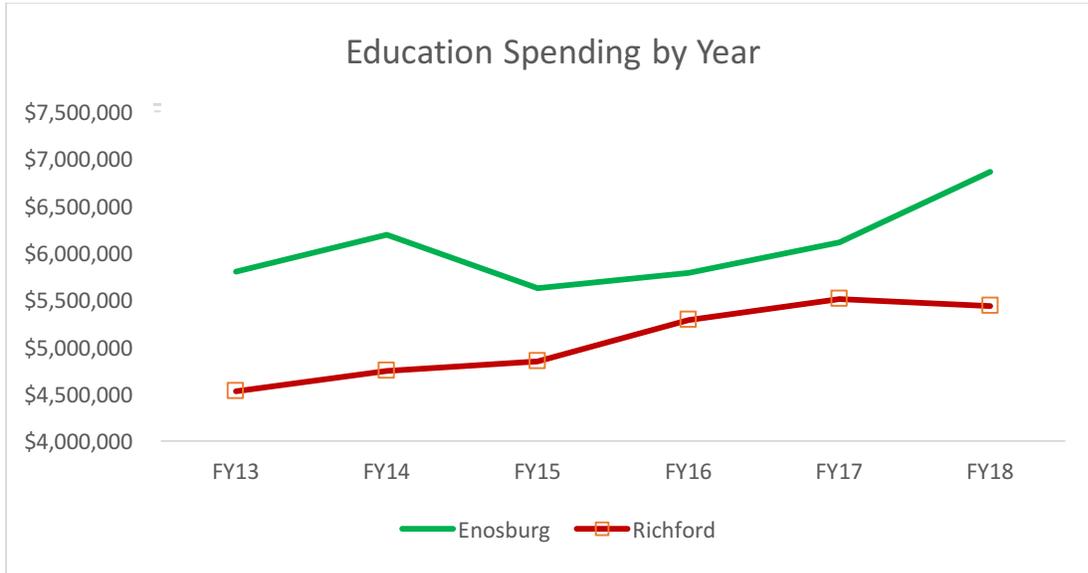


Table 21. Enosburgh and Richford Education Spending by Year (including totals).

<u>Education Spending</u>	<u>FY13</u>	<u>FY14</u>	<u>FY15</u>	<u>FY16</u>	<u>FY17</u>	<u>FY18</u>
Enosburgh	\$5,799,415	\$6,188,285	\$5,623,098	\$5,783,268	\$6,111,150	\$6,862,387
Richford	\$4,531,337	\$4,744,113	\$4,847,101	\$5,287,739	\$5,508,376	\$5,435,092
Total	\$10,330,752	\$10,932,398	\$10,470,199	\$11,071,007	\$11,619,526	\$12,297,479



Table 22. Enosburg and Richford Education Spending Per Pupil by Year.

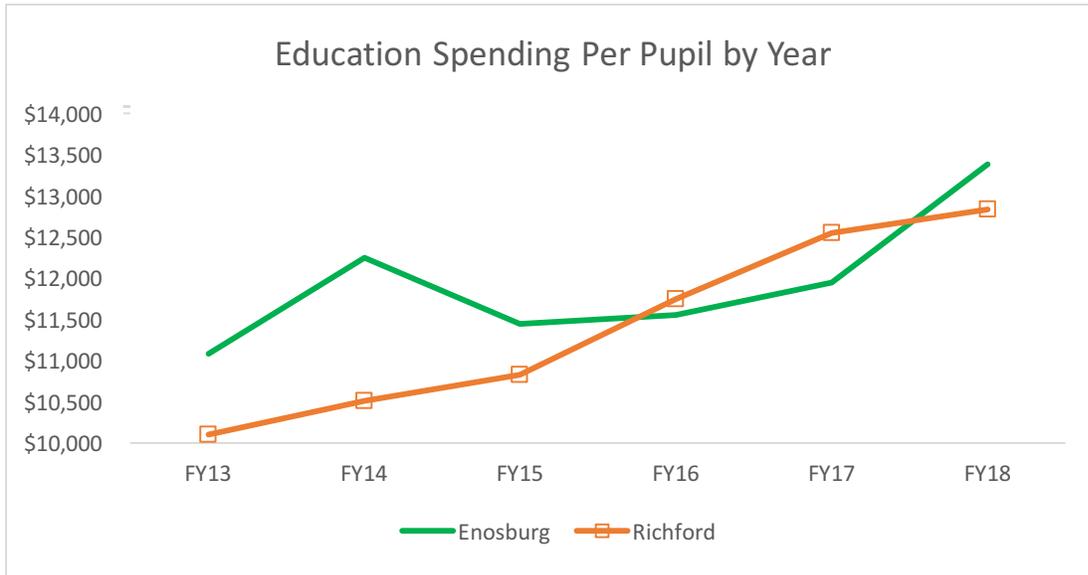


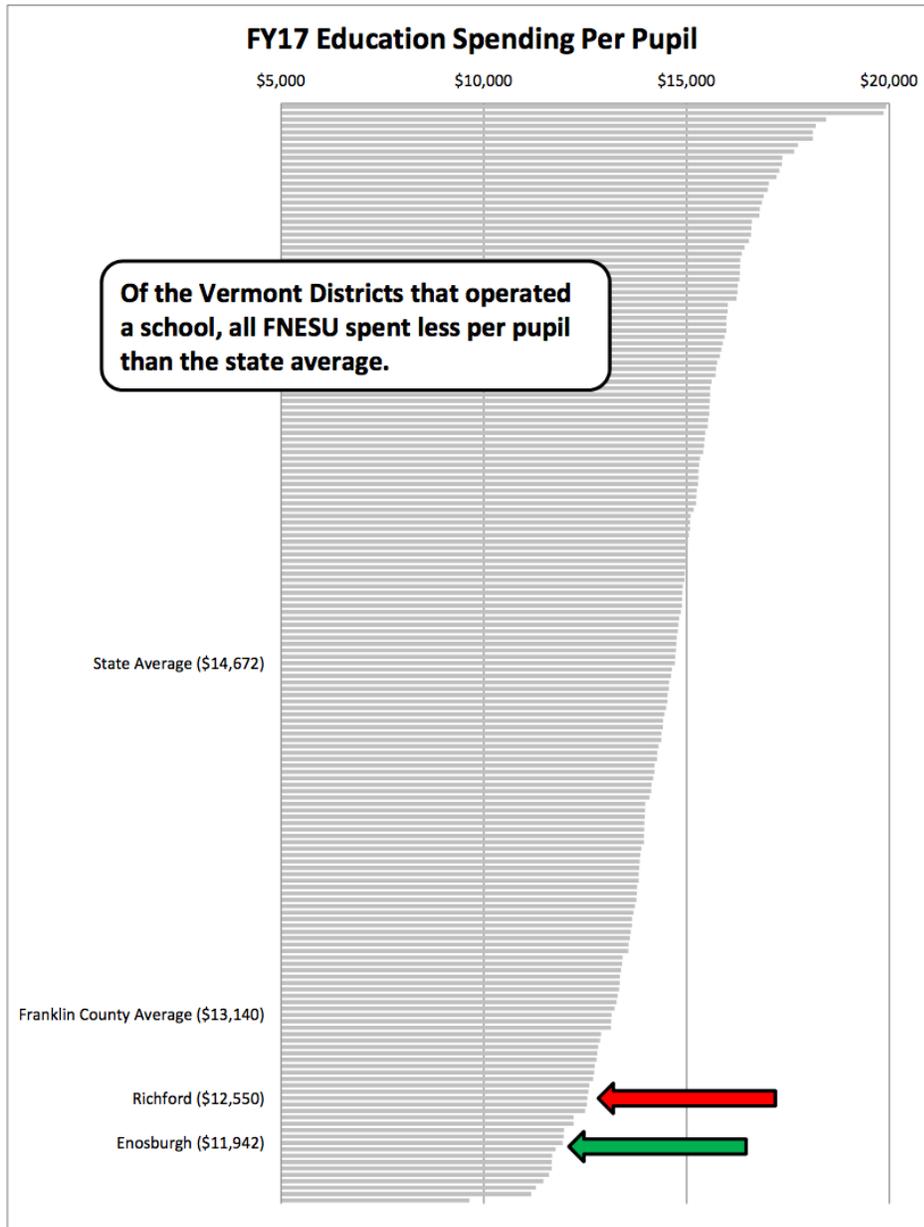
Table 23. Education Spending Per Pupil by Year (FY'13-present).

Ed Spending PP	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18
Enosburgh	\$11,077	\$12,248	\$11,445	\$11,551	\$11,942	\$13,381
Richford	\$10,096	\$10,509	\$10,822	\$11,746	\$12,550	\$12,832

Note: FY 17 is the year grade 6 moved from Richford Elementary School to Richford Jr./Sr. High School



Table 24. Enosburgh and Richford FY'17 Education Spending Per Pupil (contrasted with other districts, the county average, and state average).



Status of Facilities, Debt & Reserve Funds

The tables below (Tables 25-27) illustrate that there are no major capital projects pending for either district. While Richford has retired its most recent capital debt, Enosburgh’s debt will continue into the next decade. As of July 1, 2017, both districts reported having reserve funds.

Table 25. Status of Enosburgh and Richford Building Projects.

<u>District</u>	<u>Major Projects Pending</u>	<u>Debt Owed</u>	<u>Current Reserve Funds</u>
Enosburgh	None	\$2,490,000; VMBB Bond due 2022 \$45,000; VMBB Bond due 2025	Capital Reserve: \$107,352
Richford	None	\$0	Capital Reserve: \$44,235

Table 26. Enosburgh and Richford FY’17 Insured Values.

Enosburgh Schools	\$26,976,700
Enosburgh Outbuildings / Land	\$714,743
Richford Schools	\$14,403,500
Richford Outbuildings / Land	\$1,127,000



Table 27. Enosburgh and Richford FY18 Bonded Indebtedness.

	FY18 Interest Payment	FY18 Principal Payment	7/1/17 Balance
Enosburgh 2002 Bond	\$84,527	\$415,000	\$2,490,000
Enosburgh 2005 Bond	\$1,556	\$5,000	\$45,000
Total:	\$86,083	\$420,000	\$2,535,000



Physical Conditions of Enosburgh and Richford Schools

With respect to original construction, modernizations and maintenance, both Enosburgh and Richford Town School Districts have strong traditions of care and pride in their schools' physical plants.

Of the five schoolhouses, the most recently constructed facility is the Cold Hollow Career Center. The two towns' elementary schools were both built in the 1960's. The two high school complexes are the most senior buildings, although both were expansively renovated prior to the imposition of the state's current school construction moratorium.

All facilities are ADA compliant and current with Life & Safety codes.



Schools' Missions, Visions and Educational Goals

Franklin Northeast Supervisory Union has adopted a central and overarching mission statement.

The overarching mission of FNESU: The mission of the Franklin Northeast Supervisory Union (FNESU) Learning Community is to adopt, promote, and support high expectations for all its members. FNESU will use data and research-based best practices to make informed decisions so that all children learn and succeed in each area of development.

The FNESU Vision Statement: The mission of the Franklin Northeast Supervisory Union (FNESU) Learning Community is to adopt, promote, and support high expectations for all its members. FNESU will use data and research-based best practices to make informed decisions so that all children learn and succeed in each area of development.

In alignment with the SU mission statement, Enosburgh has a shared mission statement among its schools, and the Richford schools have separate mission statements.

Enosburgh Schools' Mission Statement: The mission of Enosburgh Schools is to create an environment conducive to the expansion of knowledge; the learning of technical, creative and academic skills; and the appreciation of cultural diversity. This environment shall empower students to realize their potential in cooperation with peers, educators, parents, and the community.



Richford Elementary School Mission: The educational mission of Richford Elementary School focuses upon the student as an individual and as a contributing member of the school community. It is important that we prepare our children for the future as productive members of society.

The primary function of Richford Elementary is to develop skills in our students that will enable them to meet high standards of communication, problem solving, and personal responsibility across all disciplines. We expect children to develop respect and responsibility for themselves, each other and their community.

Our goal is to have each child reach his or her full academic and social potential. This will be done by developing a strong partnership between parents and the school community, as well as proved in an environment of high expectations that foster cooperation and enthusiasm for learning.

Richford Junior Senior High School Mission Statement: Learning at Richford Junior-Senior High School is a partnership among administrators, teachers, parents, students, and the community, that challenges students to become self-directed, lifelong learners. All students will achieve their full potential in a safe, caring, and respectful environment. All students will meet academic expectations, and will become civically and socially responsible members of their community.

The schools' mission statements reflect generally common purpose, yet are unique and specific to the schools' distinct communities and respective cultures.



Shared Work on Curriculum by Enosburgh and Richford Educators

Good alignment currently exists between Enosburgh and Richford schools. Examples include:

- Curriculum is aligned with Common Core State Standards.
- The districts' teachers share curriculum work in a Learning Academy model.
- Teachers in all schools use curriculum maps to outline learning targets and educational goals for units of study.
- Grades K-5 share a math program (Bridges Mathematics and Literacy) and units of study.
- Regular meetings with grade level teams and content teams from both districts are organized.
- Literacy and math leaders from each school meet regularly.
- Shared work on PBGR is noteworthy.
- The schools have moved together to grade-less / proficiency based reporting structures.
- Both districts' schools have benefitted from the partnership of principals working with FNESU administrators on an array of curriculum, instruction and assessment topics.



PRIOR ACT 46 EXPLORATIONS, ACTION & OUTCOMES

This Alternative Governance Structure proposal reflects the third significant Act 46 engagement by Enosburgh and Richford school communities.

2015-2016

In September 2015, the school boards of all Franklin Northeast Supervisory Union (FNESU) member districts voted to form a Study Committee under Act 46. The objective of the Study Committee was to examine all options that would provide more educational opportunities and equity for students while creating more operational efficiencies through district level mergers.

During the study period, authentic conversations were held by the Study Committee, and by administrators among Franklin Northeast Supervisory Union, Franklin West Supervisory Union, Franklin Northwest Supervisory Union, Grand Isle Supervisory Union and (then) Franklin Central Supervisory Union who discussed inter-district options

After eight months of research and analysis, community feedback and extensive committee member discussions, a majority of Study Committee supported bringing to the voters a proposal to combine all FNESU districts into one school district. Members from all five FNESU boards were not unanimous in support of this direction as the best option.

With a complex governance comprised of multiple boards and committees, no single elected body was responsible for all preK-12 programming and budgeting decisions. Based on the existing governance structure, citizens across FNESU with ideas or concerns sometimes needed to address multiple boards. Comprehensive direct accountability was incomplete. Individual school boards had limited responsibility for their budgets with costs for special education, transportation, salaries, administration, and insurance set by other bodies. With a unified district, the Committee felt citizens could hold a single board accountable for all aspects of



school governance.

The proposed unification plan would have brought the five separate school districts together under one school board, which would be responsible for the educational program for all students, PreK-12, at a cost that tax payers can support.

The State Board approved proposal was considered by the voters in the five towns of Franklin Northeast Supervisory Union on June 7, 2016. All five towns voted against the proposed merger approximately 2½:1 (361 to 895). Enosburgh voters rejected the proposed merger 2:1 (82-158) and Richford voters downed it 3½:1 (60-207).

The vote post-mortem analysis concluded the vote failed for reasons including loss of high school choice by the three preK-8 districts, fears of local control being lost, smaller towns fearing undue power potentially being wielded by larger towns, a mistaken belief that Act 46 would soon be repealed, inadequate additional financial savings, opposition rhetoric and a lack of specific detail on how a new single consolidated district would operate.

2017

A legislative amendment to Act 46 allowed for an additional approach for the member districts of FNESU as they considered how best to address their needs.

In September 2017, the Town School District Boards of all five Franklin Northeast Supervisory Union (FNESU) member districts opted to revisit all options, and not just merger options. The boards voted to form two 706b study committees under Acts 46 and Act 49. The objective of the study committees was to examine district merger options that would provide increased educational opportunities and equity for students while creating more operational efficiencies through district level mergers. After thoughtful research and careful analysis, extensive community feedback and thorough committee member discussions, the 706b Study Committee



supported bringing to the voters a proposal to create a Side-by-Side Merger, with two new Unified Union School Districts (UUSDs) under the FNESU umbrella.

On the pK-12 (Enosburgh and Richford) “side,” no new extended regional conversations occurred as no other pK-12 district was proximate to Enosburgh and Richford.

The 706b Study Committee recommended an Alternative Structure Side-by-Side Merger under Act 46 & Act 49; which would have created two pK-12 UUSDs: a pK-12 Operating UUSD (Enosburgh & Richford): and a pK-8 Operating/9-12 Tuitioning UUSD (by the three other districts) under the existing Franklin Northeast Supervisory Union. FNESU would continue to be the umbrella organization that would work with both member districts in order to improve educational quality and provide for more equitable access to learning opportunities and services, while sharing both financial and human resources to ensure the affordability and sustainability of these efforts.

The proposed change to the governance structure would reduce the number of member school district boards governing schools from five to two boards. Enosburgh and Richford would merge to create a pK-12 UUSD. Bakersfield, Berkshire and Montgomery would merge to create a pK-12 UUSD.

The Committee’s proposals were approved by the State Board in November, 2017. On November 28, 2017, the matter was considered by voters with mixed results. The pK-8 Operating/9-12 Tuitioning UUSD “side” was approved by voters in the necessary communities of Bakersfield and Berkshire.

The pK-12 “side” involving Enosburgh and Richford however, did not pass as both Enosburgh and Richford were designated as “necessary” districts in order to form the pK-12 side. It passed in Enosburgh (157-65) but failed in Richford (99-108).



The vote post-mortem analysis concluded the pK-12 side vote (Enosburgh and Richford) failed for reasons including debt sharing, a belief that the same outcomes could be achieved without formally consolidating, concerns over future school closures, town-based boards are valued and ought to be retained, loss of local control of town school district budget items/facilities/policy/facility management and concerns over the common tax rate which would have resulted in an increase for one town.



Prior Act 46 Outreach Efforts

For the 2016 vote, fifteen community meetings were sponsored to address that proposal. For the 2017 vote, the Enosburgh and Richford boards coordinated numerous Act 46 community outreach and engagement activities. Enosburgh and Richford held two informational meetings with both boards present: September 5, 2017 at Richford High School and September 7, 2017 at Enosburg Falls Middle High School. The purpose of these meetings was to inform the public of Act 46 and Act 49 and to answer any questions. In Enosburgh on November 8, 2017 and November 9, 2017, board members set up informational tables at Enosburg Middle High School and Enosburg Elementary School to answer any questions from the public. In Richford, board members set up informational tables on November 9, 2017 at Richford Junior Senior High School and the Richford Elementary School. On November 10, 2017, unification discussion was held at Greenwood's Bakery in Richford inviting the public to stop by for coffee and participate in a conversation addressing concerns and thoughts. On November 16, 2017, a similar event took place at The Dairy Center, a local Enosburgh restaurant. Each of these events was publicized through the FNESU Facebook page, mailed flyers, as well as utilizing All Call, which generated informational emails and phone messages.



CONTEMPORARY CONDITIONS BETWEEN THE ENOSBURGH AND RICHFORD TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICTS

A genuine spirit of cooperation exists between the two school districts. Examples of efforts to expand student opportunities include:

- Enosburgh and Richford share in efficiencies realized through the SU level, including the Supervisory Union Superintendent, senior administrators, special education, curriculum, policy, transportation, and negotiations with teacher and support staff unions.
- Enosburgh and Richford jointly benefit from collaborative inservice trainings and district Academy Days which are full days where cohorts of teachers from all of the sending districts, i.e. grade level, content level, etc., meet to collaborate regarding curriculum and instruction.
- Enosburgh and Richford share in a K-12 Local Comprehensive Assessment System. This aligns multiple data points for Enosburgh and Richford to assess educational equity within their districts.
- Enosburgh and Richford benefit from centralized special education services, lessening the burden that could otherwise be felt by one of the districts.
- Enosburgh and Richford share Innovation Coaches, enabling both to build capacity across schools as they align Proficiency Based Learning.
- Enosburgh and Richford have common graduation, honor roll and athletic eligibility requirements.
- Enosburgh and Richford have each hosted Community College of Vermont summer courses, open to students from both districts.
- Enosburgh and Richford have invited students from both districts to participate in enrichment activities. Examples include Richford offering the ASVAB and Enosburgh students attended. For the past several years, Enosburgh offered an end of the year Physics field trip with Richford students participating.

Cold Hollow Career Center is a prime example of how both schools already work together. The



two sending high schools (Enosburgh and Richford) have worked in recent years to align the high schools' schedules around students' SBAC testing needs and their exam schedules to further ensure students' access to the Center. In addition, CHCC addresses not only students' needs, it also provides many adult learning opportunities for local citizens.

Currently, FNESU curriculum leaders facilitate a Learning Academy model of professional development, which brings the districts' teachers within the SU together to align curriculum for educational quality and equity. This is part of the professional development plan for both Richford and Enosburgh districts, which supports the EQS for needs based professional learning. Additional days are scheduled for teachers across districts to attend the Academy in order to closely align opportunities. For instance, it was determined that there were educational needs in Middle School science due to the transition of adopting the Next Generation Science Standards and Proficiency Based Learning, so there were additional times added for middle school science teachers to work in the Academy supporting the EQS in the areas of curriculum content and instructional practices. These are all-day, intensive work sessions that support the partnerships between the Richford and Enosburgh districts with the development of equitable, rigorous education.

The FNESU Leadership Team includes all building principals within the SU. This leadership team meets for a full day once a month in order to align priorities as well as to support the work being done in the Academy. This collaboration supports the combined vision and shared educational opportunities across districts.

Looking to the future, with the implementation of Proficiency Based Learning and the shift in instruction, the FNESU Academy is pivotal in the aligning of opportunities and instruction which in turn meets the EQS.

Both Richford and Enosburgh have academic programs that are unique to their respective districts. For example, Richford offers classes such as Robotics class, Intro to Code and Video Game Design, and a First Responder class; Enosburgh offers JROTC, Intro to Documentary Film,



and Entrepreneurship. While both schools offer Advanced Placement (AP) classes, Enosburgh offers eight, while Richford offers three. Both offer Dual Enrollment courses although in different courses. Looking forward, it is this diversity that the boards would like to support for both districts. Through the board's Act 46 conversations, ideas of virtual learning and complimentary schedules have been proposed to bring these types of offerings to students across districts in order to create equitable opportunities while maintaining and supporting the individual identities of each school.



MEETING THE GOALS OF ACT 46

AY'17 enrollment (PK-12) for Enosburgh schools was 688. AY'17 enrollment (PK-12) for Richford schools was 424. Grades 9-12 high school enrollments for the same year were 330 for Enosburgh and 144 for Richford.

The Enosburgh-Richford School Council ("ERSC") is a new convention. The proposed design, understanding and intent of the ERSC is tentatively outlined as follows. (The Enosburgh and Richford Boards welcome the assistance of Secretary Holcombe to assist in further refining the design of the ERSC.) The ERSC has not yet been formed, pending the Secretary's consideration of this Alternative Governance Proposal.

- ❖ The ERSC will be a Council formally created by the Enosburgh and Richford Town School Districts' boards. A super-majority vote of 80% is required by each board to create the ERSC.
- ❖ The ERSC will be populated by appointed school board members of the Enosburgh and Richford Town School Districts' boards, two from each. In addition, each board will appoint a non-board member citizen to the ERSC. The six members of the ERSC will be identified and appointed annually at each board's annual reorganizational meeting.
- ❖ The FNESU Superintendent will be a *de facto* member of ERSC. S/he will serve in an advisory capacity, and will not have voting authority. The Superintendent shall have the authority and discretion to require the attendance of other personnel (FNESU, Enosburgh and Richford) to attend ERSC meetings as agendas warrant.
- ❖ Meetings of the ERSC will be managed in accordance with FNESU's committee policy and Vermont's open meeting law(s). Such shall include required meeting warnings, public opportunity to attend and be heard, maintenance of minutes of the ERSC's



proceedings, rules of order and so forth.

- ❖ Standing agenda items for the ERSC will be each of the five educational and fiscal goals of Act 46, each with two points of emphasis: (a) current state; and (b) short and long-term opportunities for cooperation and collaboration between the districts.
- ❖ Both boards will annually present their draft budgets to the ERSC, prior to local board adoption for the purpose of further inspiring dialogue over budget priorities (goals) and potential shared opportunities, especially as related to the goals of Act 46. For the sake of efficiency and open communication, it may be prudent for the ERSC to attend the local districts' budget development meeting(s).
- ❖ The work of the ERSC shall be advisory in nature. Its actions may involve recommendations for action by the Enosburgh and / or Richford Town School District board(s).
- ❖ The ERSC will meet at least quarterly. The quarterly meetings are intended to establish ERSC meeting cycles to occur not less than four times per year.
- ❖ Annually not later than June 30, the ERSC will publicly report on its work to the Enosburgh and Richford boards and communities.
- ❖ The ERSC may only be disbanded by a super-majority vote of 80% by both school boards.



MOVING FORWARD: MEETING THE GOALS OF ACT 46

The goals of Act 46 continue. The following Tables (Table 28-32) contrast the current state of the districts’ efforts to achieve the goals with how they may do so moving forward.

Goal #1: Provide Substantial Equity in the Quality and Variety of Education Opportunities

The constructive role of the ERSC can serve to be influential in addressing this Act #46 goal.

Table 28. Act 46: Goal #1.

<u>Current State</u>	<u>Future State Under Proposed Alternative Governance Structure</u>
The Enosburgh and Richford Town School District boards contribute and cooperate with FNESU centralization opportunities and autonomously make other decisions	The Enosburgh and Richford Town School District boards will continue to contribute and cooperate with FNESU centralization opportunities and will make other decisions with advice and counsel from the ERSC.
Enosburgh and Richford Town School Districts are members of FNESU and receive the benefits of centralized superintendent-level services	Enosburgh and Richford Town School Districts will remain members of FNESU and receive the benefits of centralized superintendent-level services
A single mission statement / unified vision exists	A single mission statement / unified vision will continue to exist
A single strategic plan exists	A single strategic plan will continue to exist
There is consistency in Common PK-12 Assessment Plan	Ongoing consistency in Common PK-12 Assessment plan
Consistency in delivery of student support systems	Ongoing consistency in delivery of student support systems



<u>Current State</u>	<u>Future State Under Proposed Alternative Governance Structure</u>
Desire for administrators to focus more attention in visionary and collaborative leadership	Heightened expectation and accountability for administrators in the two districts to attend to visionary and collaborative leadership
School size limitations and budget constraints restrict meaningful advances beyond the current program offerings	With increased partnership between the two school districts, there is heightened potential for collaborative agreements (i.e., increased program options in specialized courses such as World Languages, Algebra, Coding, etc. At the high school level this can include increased access to AP courses, Dual Enrollment courses, World Languages, etc. Students could potentially participate remotely or staff could travel to offer courses in any of the schools)
Constrained ability to increase student opportunities, not only in core subject areas, but also in extracurricular and extended school year programming and activities	Collaborative agreements can also result in increased opportunities for heightened student opportunities, not only in core subject areas, but also in extracurricular and extended school year programming and activities
Common curriculum goals and assessment priorities exist between the districts.	Continue to standardize common curriculum goals and assessment priorities between the districts.
A commitment to preserving the character and unique culture of each school	An ongoing commitment to preserving the character and unique culture of each school



<u>Current State</u>	<u>Future State Under Proposed Alternative Governance Structure</u>
Some ability to share resources and staff expertise between the school districts	Through the work of the ERSC, heightened emphasis on the sharing of resources and staff expertise between the school districts
Other than students attending CHCC, there is limited flexibility for the movement of students between Enosburgh and Richford schools	Through the work of the ERSC, this can be a focal point
Varsity sports are individually offered at the two high schools	The ERSC can advise on merging sports teams (as a means of preventing the cessation of a sport offering due to low participation) or the creation of new shared teams (i.e., golf)



Goal #2: Lead Students to Achieve or Exceed the State’s Education Quality Standards.

Gaps exist between the districts with respect to staffing levels and time for instruction. This will be a primary focal point for the ERSC. Other lesser opportunities may also exist.

Table 29. Act 46: Goal #2.

<u>Current State</u>	<u>Future State Under Proposed Alternative Governance Structure</u>
There is good consistency in curriculum development	There will be greater consistency in curriculum development
There is good consistency in the delivery of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)	There will be increased consistency in the delivery of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)
There is limited ability to cross-utilize interventionists and instructional coaches between the districts	There will be increased focus on maximizing the cross-utilization of interventionists and instructional coaches between the districts
Some opportunities exist between the districts for accelerated learning opportunities	Increased opportunities can exist between the districts for accelerated learning opportunities
School size limitations and budget constraints restrict meaningful advances beyond the current program offerings	Through increased collaborative agreements, there is heightened potential for increased program options in specialized courses such as World Languages, Algebra, Coding, etc. At the high school level this can include increased access to AP courses, Dual Enrollment courses, World Languages, etc. Students could potentially participate remotely or staff could travel to offer courses in any of the schools



<u>Current State</u>	<u>Future State Under Proposed Alternative Governance Structure</u>
Well-coordinated high-quality professional development opportunities through access to the in-house expertise that now exists between the districts	Continue well-coordinated high-quality professional development opportunities through access to the in-house expertise that exists between the districts
Teacher turnover is quite high throughout FNESU, including Enosburgh and Richford, which challenges continuity of the two districts' staffing patterns.	Enhance the ability to recruit and retain skilled teachers with shared staffing; any stability that can be created in staff retention increases the experience level of staff benefitting student learning outcomes between the two districts.
Working to align Proficiency Based Graduation requirements for middle schools and Transferrable Skills in all FNESU schools	Advancing alignment of Proficiency Based Graduation requirements for middle schools and Transferable skills between the two districts
Striving to provide consistency of policy and procedures for Proficiency Based Graduation Requirements in both high schools	Ensure consistency of policy and procedures for Proficiency Based Graduation Requirements in both schools
Continue to develop the joint system of building Personalized Learning Plans for all students in grades 7-12	Complete the development of a joint system of building Personalized Learning Plans for all 7-12 students in the two districts
Working toward a Proficiency Based Learning system within FNESU	Advance efforts toward a Proficiency Based Learning system between the districts
Efforts to ensure consistency of technology access for all students in the two districts.	Ensure consistency of technology access for all students in the two districts



Goal #3: Maximize Operational Efficiencies Through Balanced Flexibility to Manage, Share, and Transfer Resources, With the Goal of Increasing the District-Level Ratio of Students to Full-Time Equivalent Staff

Franklin Northeast Supervisory Union is an established state leader in having already realized significant operational efficiencies. Examples include:

- *Centralized special education services for all students*
- *Centralized transportation services*
- *Centralized collective bargaining for support staff*
- *Alignment of policies and procedures*
- *Streamlined accounting system*
- *Common salaries and benefits structures*

The staff-to-student ratio recommendation of the governor is 5:1. Currently Richford Junior Senior High School and Enosburg Elementary School were above this average, with ratios of 6.15:1 and 5.4:1 respectively. Enosburg Middle / High School and Richford Elementary were just below the target with ratios 4.95:1 and 4.93:1 respectively. Both boards have been mindful of student/staff ratios and the affordability around that. Looking forward, with board collaboration in regards to staffing flexibility across districts, these ratios could improve.

The ERSC will consider this goal and seek further management, sharing and transfer of resources in the following ways. Examples include shared staffing (i.e., sharing a common educator to provide part-time foreign language in both districts), school choice, equipment, services and shared contracts



Table 30. Act 46: Goal #3.

<u>Current State</u>	<u>Future State Under Proposed Alternative Governance Structure</u>
Constrained ability to share staff	Enhanced ability to share staff
The districts independently hire part-time staff	The districts would consult with one another prior to independently hiring part-time staff
Class sizes are fixed based on each district's situational conditions	Reviews for leveling class sizes may be possible through reviews by the ERSC.
Student enrollment is restricted to town of residence.	An examination of other supervisory union's successful school choice policies (i.e., Mt. Mansfield Modified Union School District / CESU for grades K-8 ¹⁶) can be considered for possible applicability
Some operational services are exclusive to each district.	Fresh opportunities to efficiently share operational services can be considered; examples include buildings and grounds needs and increased centralized purchasing (cleaning supplies, fuel, supplies and technology)
No increased scale "breaks" for subscriptions and other instructional materials	New possibilities for better scaled "breaks" for subscriptions and other instructional materials
Current overtime and contracted service needs are independently managed by the two districts	Potential savings and economies of scale may emerge through the recommendations of the ERSC.
Limited opportunity to jointly apply for grants	With the guidance of the ERSC, seek new opportunities for grant sharing.

¹⁶ Mt. Mansfield Modified Union School District / CESU [school choice information](#)



Goal #4: Promote Transparency and Accountability

Strong levels of transparency and accountability independently exist in each community.

Table 31. Act 46: Goal #4.

<u>Current State</u>	<u>Future State Under Proposed Alternative Governance Structure</u>
<p>Transparency and accountability are values highly held and earnestly reflected by each board. However, limited board-to-board opportunities for structured interaction exists.</p>	<p>The existence of the ERSC will serve to “look under the hood” of each district in search of new opportunities and efficiencies. Such would further the boards’ transparency and accountability for voters.</p>
<p>At the town-level, there is good taxpayer sensitivity to the town school districts’ budgets and the execution of the budgets.</p>	<p>Maintaining budget development and execution at the town school district level will keep voters closely attuned to school districts’ budgets, their educational investments and associated related tax implications.</p>
<p>The town school districts have different forms of voting on school budgets. Each method (Australian ballot and town meeting floor voting) is the locally preferred means.</p>	<p>The locally preferred voting method in each town school district will remain.</p>



Goal #5: Education is Delivered at a Cost that Parents, Voters, and Taxpayers Value

Recently, the two communities each have a strong record of passing annual school budgets. However, this can't be assumed or taken for granted.

The two districts have contained per pupil spending, as reflected in Table 24. In both examples, per pupil spending is below county and state averages.

Table 32. Act 46: Goal #5.

<u>Current State</u>	<u>Future State Under Proposed Alternative Governance Structure</u>
Independently, cost containment has become increasingly challenging.	Through the efforts of the ERSC, some additional budgetary savings may be achieved.
The voting methods differ in the two town school districts. Each is the locally preferred method.	The culture of each school district's voting method would remain intact.



SUMMARY

- Enosburgh and Richford are connected as neighboring communities by the Missisquoi River and Vermont Highway #105.
- Enosburgh and Richford have historically co-existed in ways of mutual benefit.
- Enosburgh and Richford are long-standing members of Franklin Northeast Supervisory Union (FNESU).
- Enosburgh and Richford are the two sending high schools to the Cold Hollow Career Center.
- Enosburgh and Richford School Districts benefit from the many meaningful efforts over the past decade to centralize services and operations through FNESU.
- No other PK-12 districts are reasonably proximate to Enosburgh and Richford.
- The Enosburgh and Richford School Boards have meaningfully cooperated with one another in addressing the ideals of Act 46 over the past two years.
- Two previous votes to voluntarily merge Enosburgh and Richford were defeated.
- Under this Alternative Governance Proposal, the creation of the Enosburgh Richford School Council (ERSC) will be charged with meeting at least four times annually to consider the five goals of Act 46 and advise the two districts' boards on mutually beneficial ways to better serve their students and communities. With the boards of Richford and Enosburg working collaboratively, with the support and guidance of the ERSC, alignment and shared opportunities will only get stronger.
- Through this Alternative Governance Proposal, the Enosburgh and Richford School Districts would continue as individual schools, each with its own identity, while supporting increased growth through collaborative agreements.

This proposal creates a shift toward meaningful collaborative agreements. The work of the ERSC will support the districts and their respective schools with collaborative agreements through being respectful and responsive to the communities' needs. The ERSC will further serve to bridge voters' articulated concerns over the prospects of merger.

